

- 0. WE ARE FREE! - Story Preface
- 1. A DIVINELY ORDAINED FIGHT
- 2. AMERICAN FIRSTS
- 3. DRAFTING THE DECLARATION
- 4. WE ARE FREE!**
- 5. EVIDENCE OF FREEDOM



The concepts in this graphic are the issues America's Founders considered as they drafted the Declaration of Independence and, later, created the United States Constitution. Image online via the Library of Congress.

On July 2, 1776, Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Second Continental Congress, penned Lee's resolution severing the ties with England and put it to a vote:

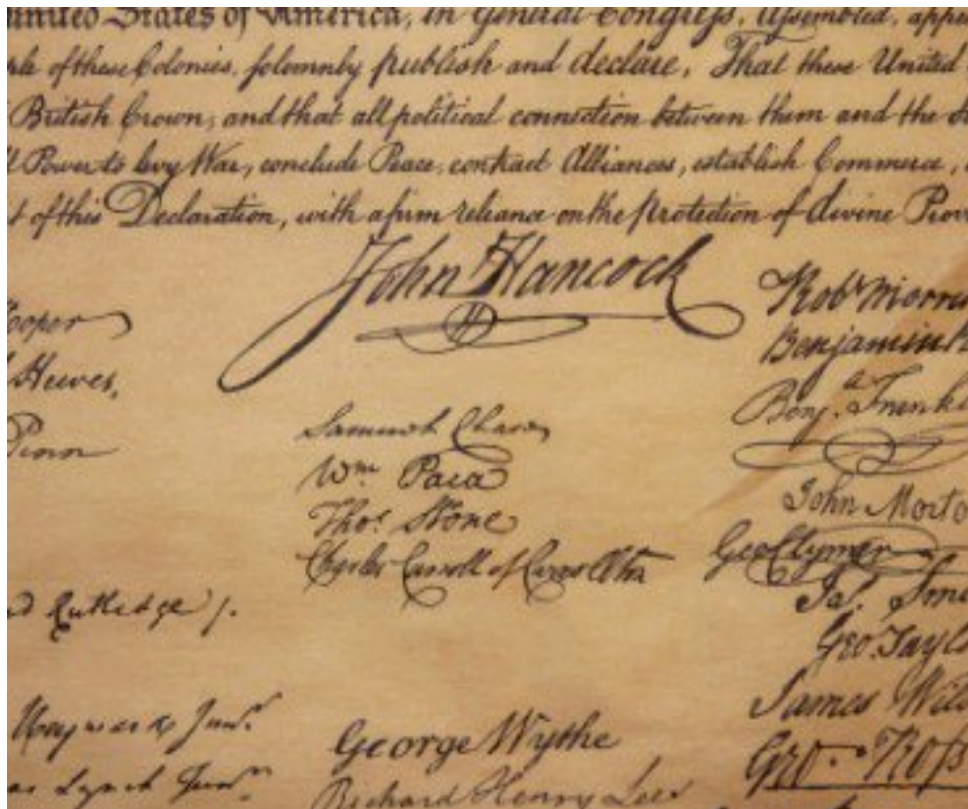
Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and, of right, ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connexion between them, and the state of Great Britain, is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.

All the colonies except New York (which abstained) voted in favor of the resolution. (Follow this link to see the actual results of the vote - look at the lower right side.) On July 2, 1776 Congress approved the concept: the British colonies would sever all political ties with Great Britain. John Adams told his wife Abigail it was the greatest day in the history of the country.

More work had to be done on the Declaration itself to make it acceptable to all the colonies. The committee needed two more days to complete the final draft. (Follow this link to see handwritten changes by Jefferson, John Adams and Ben Franklin.)

On July 4, 1776 the final version of the Declaration of Independence was ready for a vote. This time, even New York approved.

When it came time for the representatives to sign the document - which actually put them in peril with the Crown - John Hancock, president of the Congress, signed in huge letters.



He wanted to be sure the king saw his name. Today, his is the only signature still legible on the original Declaration.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WE-ARE-FREE-American-Colonies>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WE-ARE-FREE-American-Colonies>

Media Stream



CHARLES THOMPSON ESQ.^R
Secretary to Congress.

Del. by M. 1755 by R. W. B. 1755, N. 1755, N. 1755.

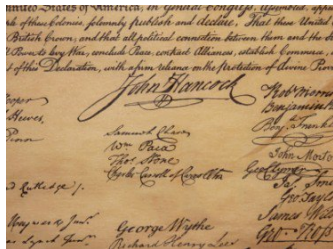
Charles Thomson - Secretary of Congress

This engraving of Charles Thomson, by Pierre Eugène du Simitière (1736-1784), is from *Portraits of the Generals, Ministers, Magistrates, Members of Congress & others*, 1783.

It is online, courtesy Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. Reproduction Number: LC-USZ62-44786.

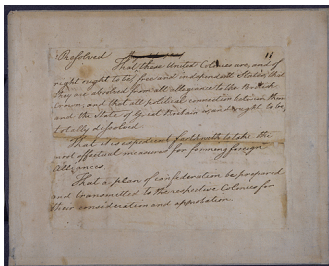
View this asset at:

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John Hancock Signature on the Declaration

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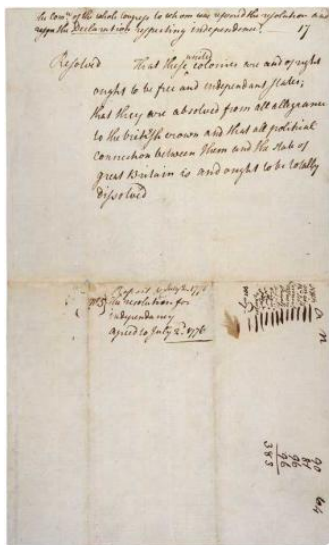


Richard Henry Lee - Resolution for Independence

U.S. National Archives.

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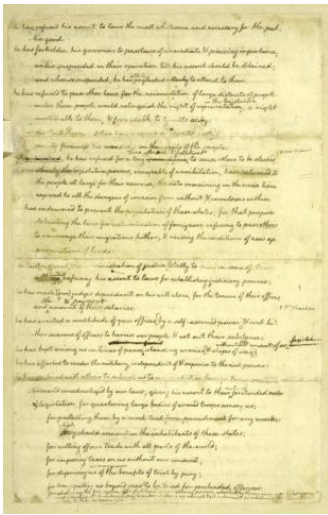
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Richard-Henry-Lee-Resolution-for-Independence>



Resolution for Independence - The Vote

U.S. National Archives.

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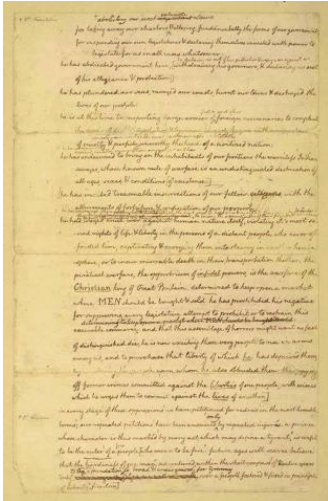


Declaration of Independence - Grievances Against the King

U.S. National Archives.

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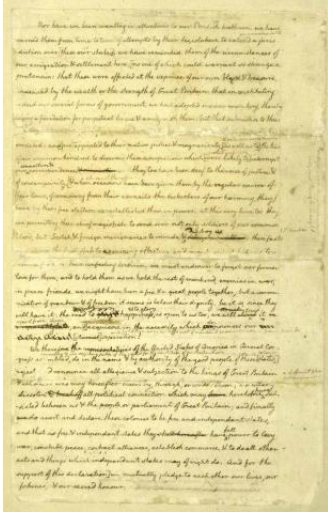


Declaration of Independence - Original Edits

U.S. National Archives.

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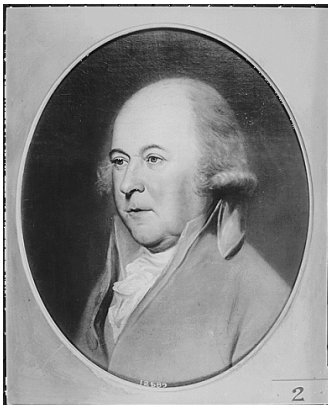


Ben Franklin Notations on the Declaration Draft

U.S. Library of Congress.

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John Adams - Member of the Declaration Committee

U.S. National Archives.

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Signing the Declaration - Unanimous Approval

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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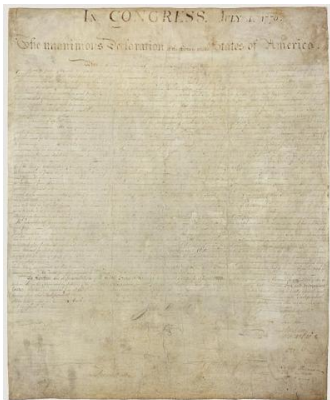


Declaration of Independence - Signatures

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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Faded Original - Declaration of Independence Today

U.S. National Archives.

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WE ARE FREE!

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